

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A polybenzazole fiber having a strength retention (%) of 80% or more, which is determined by the equation: $(a/b) \times 100$, provided that the notations a and b are defined as follows:

the notation a indicates the strength of a yarn [cN/dtex] measured as follows: polybenzazole filaments are S-wise twisted so that the twist coefficient can be 30, to thereby make a yarn, which is then left to stand alone for 30 seconds, and the yarn is S-wise untwisted until the twist coefficient is decreased to 6, and the untwisted yarn is exposed to an atmosphere of 80°C and 80 RH% for 240 hours and taken out at room temperature to measure the strength of the yarn; and

the notation b indicates the strength of a yarn [cN/dtex] measured as follows: polybenzazole filaments are S-wise twisted so that the twist coefficient can be 30, to thereby make a yarn, which is then left to stand alone for 30 seconds, and the yarn is S-wise untwisted until the twist coefficient is decreased to 6, and the strength of the untwisted yarn is measured.

2. (Currently amended) A polybenzazole fiber according to claim 1, wherein the average strength of a single polybenzazole fiber with an average diameter $[[D]]$ of 5 to 22 μm and a length of 100 mm is 4.5 GPa or more.

3. (Original) A polybenzazole fiber according to claim 1, wherein the coefficient of variation CV (a standard deviation/an average value) of the diameters of a single filament, measured at 10 mm intervals over 500 mm length of the filament is 0.08 or less.

4. (Original) A polybenzazole fiber according to claim 1, wherein the stoichiometric ratio of an inorganic base to a mineral acid remaining in the fiber is 0.8 to 1.4 : 1.

5. (Currently amended) A polybenzazole fiber according to claim 1, which ~~contain~~ contains an organic pigment having a thermal decomposition temperature of 200°C or higher and is soluble in a mineral acid.

6. (Original) A polybenzazole fiber according to claim 5, wherein the content of the organic pigment is 2 to 8 mass %.

7. (Currently amended) A spun yarn comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

8. (Currently amended) A cord for reinforcing rubber, comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

9. (Currently amended) A composite material comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claim 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

10. (Currently amended) A woven or knitted fabric comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

11. (Currently amended) A knife-proof material comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

12. (Currently amended) A bullet-proof vest comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

13. (Currently amended) A high strength fiber rope comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.

14. (Currently amended) A sail cloth comprising a polybenzazole fiber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, as at least one component.